1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

one, but in village matters his voice is now more effective. He insists on being regarded as low and humble, never offers his opinion unless it is specifically sought, and never fails to behave correctly towards the superior castes. Through this he earns the respect and admiration of the whole community. Again, two Madiga cultivators, belonging to the lowest untouchable caste who are now well-off and own land, are never forced to do free menial work like the other poorer members of their caste.

What is true of land ownership, is true also of the possession of other forms of wealth. Different kinds of houses denote different social status. The rich and the well-to-do people live in substantially built bhawanti-type houses. The average families have *penkutillu*-type houses; while the poorer people live in gudse huts. Along with the house go the other household possessions. Shining brassware, items of furniture, and other similar objects add to the prestige of a family. The significance of gold and silver ornaments possessed by women is also very great in this respect. In the families on the upper level there is keen rivalry among the women to acquire more and more ornaments of precious metals, so that their 'worth' in the estimate of the community may rise. Clothing, food and the type of work done by its members largely go with the financial resources of the family. In determining the social status of a family due consideration should be given to these factors also.

In recent years government service has come to be looked upon as important and desirable. It ensures a fixed and steady income, and permits the possibility of close contact with higher officials. Because of the feudal and authoritarian tradition in the administration of the State, even the minor district officials are viewed with awe and respect by the village-folk; and as such the minor village officials and menials who, having contact with them, can possibly influence them gain in prestige among their neighbours. Persons holding very small menial posts may not win the respect of the village community in general, but within their own income—and caste group—their prestige is noticeably enhanced. Those who hold office in the internal administrative set-up of the village, that is to say the village headman, the Ganadi and the members of the village council, enjoy very considerable prestige and influence by virtue of their office.

LEVELS OF LIVING

888 Age is still another important factor of status differentiation.
554 As a general rule the aged and elderly people should be respected: they have 'the authority of grey hair' and wide experience of the vicissitudes of life. The younger members must consult the elders of the extended family in all important matters, and should give due regard to their suggestions and advice. Even where the obligations which emerge from kinship ties do not dictate this respectful behaviour, it is considered polite for young people to show regard to the elders. Intimate social relations, even outside one's family and caste, find expression in the adoption of kinship terminology and one must address the people of another family as 'grandfather', 'uncle' or 'brother' according to their respective ages. Deliberate disregard or disrespect to village elders is adversely commented upon in the society.

● 555 Finally, distinctive personality traits and possession of uncommon or difficult skills also adds to the prestige of an individual and consequently alters his status in society. Ability to talk persuasively and impressively is regarded as a definite asset. An individual's success or failure in inter-personal relations, as well as his advancement in society in general, would depend to a considerable extent on this factor. Sense of humour is an allied personality trait which is greatly admired. One who can make others laugh is regarded as highly desirable company. Special knowledge and skills contribute substantially towards enhancing an individual's prestige. Two persons belonging to the Sale caste have risen in social esteem because of their local reputation as village doctors practising the indigenous system of medicine, although the traditional status of their caste is not very high. C. R., an untouchable Madiga, enjoys some social prestige because he composes songs in the folk style. B., a barber, too has a similar reputation for being a local composer.

554 Four other factors should also be taken into account at this
562 stage. They are sex, education, urban contacts and political affiliations. Of these, considerations regarding the first are ingrained in the social pattern; the other three have a comparatively recent origin. In general man is regarded as superior to woman. In the internal organization of the village all offices are held by men, and with the exception of a few families which have no adult male members, it is a man who is regarded as the head of the family. However, the status of a woman is governed largely by the

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

other factors, particularly her caste, landownership and wealth, age, distinctive personality traits, and relationship to persons holding a government or village office. But within the same caste, income-group and age-group, the position of a woman will definitely be inferior to that of a man.

Education is now regarded as important, because it provides 'the key to' the understanding of the 'wide world' and equips one better to assert one's rights and claim one's due from officials and the cunning townspeople. It is easier for educated people to get government jobs. It is generally believed that they can contact and influence government officers much better than their illiterate counterparts in the village. However, most of the 'educated' people in the village had just four years of schooling in village schools. No one has so far had any higher education. At the time of our investigations four boys from the village were studying in secondary schools in the city, and they are the first people in the village to learn the English language. Economic benefits and gain in social prestige derived through modern education have made it a mark of respectability, and it is expected that in the near future a larger number of village boys will attend secondary schools in Secundrabad and Hyderabad.

Although there is considerable prejudice and scepticism among the village people regarding city ways and other urban traits of culture, in general it may be said that the village-folk acknowledge the importance and superiority of the townspeople. Those who have urban contacts seek to distinguish themselves from the ordinary village folk in their dress, manner of speech, food and recreations. Imitation of urban ways in the last decade and a half has come to be recognized as a distinguishing feature of respectable elements of the village population.

Introduction of democratic government in Hyderabad after the Police Action, has brought about a sudden burst of activity by a multitude of political parties in the rural areas of the State. Politics and elections appear to the people to be a sort of game, and they have not yet realized their deeper and wider implications. Affiliation with political parties provides an outlet to those who are ambitious and seek recognition of their importance.

Social status conferred on an individual by the caste system must be classified as 'ascribed status'. It is still a vital factor of status differentiation in the community, but the other factors leave

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

871 578 villagers are simple, superstitious and stupid. They believe anyone. Conditions in the village will never improve so long as they dominate the scene.' 'Without education a man is like a beast.' 'As you goad a bullock, you can goad an uneducated villager.' 'Why do petty government officers harass us so much? Only because we are illiterate.'

It may be pointed out here that so far the educated section consists only of people who have attended primary or secondary village schools for four to six years. The number of these people does not exceed eighty, and from among them also many have virtually relapsed into illiteracy. With the exception of some government officials who are not a permanent part of the village population, none has so far had the advantage of modern scientific education in one of the better schools of the city, although at the time of our investigations some half a dozen boys from the village were attending higher schools. It is interesting to note that persons having education in rural vernacular schools have the same fear, suspicion and general sentiments regarding those who have modern or 'English education', as the illiterate section of the population has about those who have a background of village [555] education. Notwithstanding the popular prejudice against education of both types, its economic advantages as well as prestige value are now generally recognized. With the gradual improvement in the standards and practices of the schools more parents are now anxious to enrol their children there. Fears still persist, however, and people urge that, besides imparting literacy, the school should also equip them better for earning their livelihood.

URBAN VERSUS RURAL

369 578 The general pattern of comment regarding urban and urbanized people is the same as that of the comment of the uneducated about the educated. In the context of urbanization, or even in that of the adoption of some urban traits, supplementary opinions are often added. 'We villagers are simple-hearted; but the town people are crafty, calculating and self-centred.' 'When the relations from the city come to stay with us we receive them well, and give them the choicest share in everything. But when we happen to go to them they have difficulty even in recognizing us. And they treat us as if we were an unwelcome burden on them.' 'Never trust a town-dweller, for he never distinguishes between